[TFR 11-1]

To the Commission Searching for Missing Americans 103132 Moscow, Il'inka Street

For the course of several years I have been trying to [1 word Blocked by what appears to be a censor's stamp] the central press to attract the attention of our and the American public to the fate of Americans POWs who became prisoners of the Japanese and were sent to Iturup Island after the tragic events at Pearl Harbor.

On 26 January 1992 I was compelled to turn to Mr. R. Strauss, the United States Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary in Moscow, about this matter. I sent a registered letter but have not received a reply from them yet. Possibly my letter did not get through. I decided therefore to turn to you.

Iturup Island is one of the largest islands in the Southern Kurile chain. At the present time Japan is persistently laying claim to the return of this island to them. Iturup island, as earlier with Japan and now with Russia is a sparsely populated island. Japanese militants made use of this island for strategic military goals. On this island in the area of Sapochnaya BAY, far from the populated areas, the Japanese built a runway after Pearl Harbor on an elevated spot. This runway was made of concrete and was over one kilometer long. It exists to this day in a dilapidated state. Among our inhabitants who came to Iturup island after it was liberated was a small civilian population who were fishermen and employed in [fish canneries?]. [TFR 11-2]

Our residents were particularly perturbed by the report that after the runway was built the American POWs were loaded onto a ship and sailed into obscurity.

From 1955 to 1957 I worked on Iturup as a construction chief on a project to renovate a small fish processing plant in the Sapochnaya bay area.

I was at this runway numerous times and I took an interest in it. I was told personally, by those who had heard from Japanese civilians, that the runway was built by American POWs.

As a builder I was also intrigued. How in this remote, unpopulated area was such a large amount of concrete construction done and there not be a single building - no warehouses, no accommodations, no dwellings, no roads etc. There weren't any signs that a large concentration of construction workers had lived there.

Below, right by Sapochnaya bay, at the foot of the mountain were excavated some horizontal tunnels with wooden reinforcing. On the floors were spread thin bamboo which grew on this island. Talk had it that these tunnels served as living quarters for American POWs where they lived in inhuman conditions at hard slave labor. In the future these tunnels supposedly became storage for aircraft bombs.

While I was on Iturup in the area of Sapochnaya Bay several small stonecrushers and concrete mixers were strewn about dismantled.

[TFR 11-3]

More importantly, I also knew from native Russian inhabitants that not far from the road from the village of Rejdovoj in the direction of the city of Kuril'sk (this is about 30 kilometers from Sapochnaya Bay) are possibly burial sites of American POWs who were doing other work on Iturup.

I'm already an old man. I'm 84 years old. The day is not far off when I depart from this sinful, mortal earth. I myself was a front line soldier. I was on the front from 7 Jan 42. I was able to endure this difficult time for our homeland, our first sad defeats, retreats, encirclements to experience the joy of our victory. I was in the hospital when victory was achieved having become an invalid of World War II. As a front line soldier I am not indifferent to the fate of the front line soldiers of our allies, the Americans, who spilled blood along with us in defeating the German and Japanese aggressors who unleashed World War II.

I hope that my report about the fate of American POWs who died on Iturup island interests you and that you will take steps to investigate this version.

It must also be noted that the Japanese militarists started their secret surprise attack on Pearl Harbor from Iturup. This island has a large, natural deep water bay, Yasnaya, where the Japanese naval fleet massed for the attack on Pearl Harbor.

In my opinion it is extremely desirable that a film crew fly to Iturup island. This is all necessary to record [TFR 11-4]

verification of my stated version about American POWs. This needs to be done immediately, before the onset of the cold and stormy weather which sets in on the island in September.

With every year there are fewer living witnesses to these tragic events. For all of this the Japanese are persistently insisting on the return of the Kurile Islands which includes Iturup. If the island of Iturup reverts back to Japan then it will be practically impossible to expose this secret. The Japanese would endeavor to destroy this runway.

If all of this is confirmed, and I am fully certain in this, this secret must be uncovered through the Japanese archive documents.

If you decide to investigate my story about dead American POWs on Iturup, I earnestly ask you to bring in Vsevolod Ovchinnikov, a journalist for Pravda, who has promised to do some investigative journalism on this version.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

Volkov, G.S.

Ukraine, Sevastopol' 335057 3 Yunasheva St. Apt 220 Tel 42-40-52 3 July 1992 Sevastopol' 80690

P.S. Please keep me informed [Cut off by FAX] [TFR 11-5]

[Envelope with stamps and a postmark from Sverdlovsk]

103132 TO: Moscow 12 Il'inka St. The Russian-American Commission

FM: Yekaterinaburg [TFR 11-6]

Dear Commission Members!

I noticed the article in the newspaper Izvestiya dated 1 July 1992 by Inga Prelovskaya on the search for convicted Americans. It could be that I am mistaken and that this is a simple coincidence but if the discussion is about Mikhail Filant'yevich Sdinkin (the expansion of M.F. Sdinkin's initials are not given in Prelovskaya's article), then I can say that I happened to see M.F. Sdinkin alive and well in 1977. He is an expert on the history of the armed forces of Afghanistan and writes scholarly works. See for example: The Democratic [Republic ?] of Afghanistan (a reference book), M. 1981, pg. 3; History of the Armed Forces of Afghanistan 1747 to 1977. m. 1985, pg. 4. He is [also] given as the author of the corresponding chapters and [1 wd illegible]. In his time, M.F. Sdinkin worked at the [Simferopol' ?] University. True, I don't know where he is now or what happened to him. If the discussion is in fact about Mikhail Filant'yevich, the Afghanistan section in the Near and Middle East department at the Institute of [1 wd illegible] of the Russian Academy of Sciences can probably give you information about him.

All my best I wish you success

21 July 1992 "An Izvestiya Reader"

[TFR 11-7]

IZVESTIA The Search for American MIAs 1 July 199[last digit Continues to the End of the Year missing-handwritten date] by Inga Prelovskaya

This is the term now designated for the Russian-American Commission for resolving the fate of US citizens missing in action during and after the Second World War in the USSR.

The commission showed me, among other documents, a copy of a letter by V. Volegov about the fate of his uncle, M.F. Sdinkin, an American citizen. A graduate of the University at Berkley, World War II found him in Kharbin where he had gone to receive his inheritance. The Japanese interned him and after the war he wound up in the USSR and again went through the entire ordeal. V Volegov met Sdinkin in Sverdlovsk in 1965 where his uncle is also buried. He left a wife and a son in the United States. His nephew requests that Nina Petrovna, who is now over 80 and lives in San Rafael, be informed about Sdinkin's fate.

The memory of people, who might have met the Americans [who came] to us by the will of military fate, is one of the sources of information on MIAs.

True, sources are not always reliable. Representatives of the Commission checked on one of the rumors in Pechora. There, in the camp, they attempted to answer all the questions, but there were no traces of David Markin's stay. According to yet another version, a possible witness lives in [Kalmykovo ?]. Although similar, it is once again conjecture. Members of the Commission still intend to fly to [Kalmykovo ?]. This is the best method of dispelling doubts. [TFR 11-8]

The Americans provided a long list of MIAs, which must be fully checked out, although undoubtedly people could have been lost in other countries as well. Among the citizens who passed through our repatriation camps, about 22,5000 Americans were freed in 1945 and in 1946-1947 - individuals. More than 100 Americans who fought on the German side were among the condemned. Of these, 82 were freed, 17 died and three escaped. The burial site of eight people has been established. Well, and what happened to the escapees? Where are those nine whose cards have no concluding remarks? The documents say nothing.

D. Volkogonov, Chairman of the Commission says, "You can admire the persistence of the Americans who, over the course of many years have tried to obtain clear answers from our leaders to questions about the fate of their missing citizens". Unfortunately, these requests weren't given the attention they deserved at the time they were made.

The current thoroughness in the search is a test of our sincerity in our new relationship with America. In turn, we may also ask the US to use its influence to help us with the return of POWs from Afghanistan.

Americans are also interested in the issue of whether or not pilots, shot down in Korea or servicemen from Vietnam ended up here.

The Vietnamese said they didn't send us American servicemen but as long as there is even a glimmer of hope we will look.

The Commission address is: 103132, Moscow, Il'inka, bldg 12. Tele. - 206-33-04, 2063573 [TFR 11-9]

[Envelope with stamp, postmark and cache of the International Conference of Space and Space Related Subjects Museums]

TO: Moscow 12 Il'inka St. The Russian-American Commission on MIAs

From: 249021 Kaluzhskaya Oblast Zhukovskij Rajon, Belousovo 1/21 Gurayanova [?] St. Apt 55 Sem'ko, V.V. [TFR 11-10]

Dear Sirs - Members of the Commission

I'm not sure if the information that I'm providing you will do any good since it happened a long time ago, in December of 1948 just after the war. At that time I was a recent student of the [L'vovebyj ?] Polytechnical Institute. By fate or more likely by the will of the Stalinist KGB, after being subjected to 6 months of mockery in the internal prison of the Byelorussian MGB and after a hasty trial, I was sent to a transit prison in the town of Orsha. At that time the Orsha transit prison was a sorting point for the GULAG for people who were caught by KGB agents from all the countries of Eastern Europe and occupied Germany. I can't say anything for the other cells of the prison, but no less than 200 people were squeezed into our common cell which had an area no more than 25 square meters. It was a real tower of Babel. Although the KGB reaped a plentiful harvest in unfortunate Byelorussia in those years, the Byelorussian prisoners in our cell just barely survived in the overall mass. Also in the cell [in descending order] were Germans, Poles, many French, several Dutch and to my great surprise [TFR 11-11]

there were even two Americans in this multilingual group. Using the few words of English that I knew, I barely managed to become acquainted with these Americans. They were both seized by KGB agents in the Soviet zone of occupied Berlin and both of them were American Army officers. To great misfortune, I am only able to remember the name of one of them, Major Gopkins [Hopkins] who was a tall, blue-eyed blond no older than 26. This major spoke a little Polish and maintained that he knew it because his mother was Polish. The second American was of medium height, of lower rank, something like a first lieutenant. They were both sentenced to a standard term - 25 years and it seems the article [of the criminal code] was the same - espionage. They both asserted that they weren't guilty of anything and that they were simply seized at [the residence of] female acquaintances. They weren't in our cell long, no more than 5 days when they were pulled out. I will be glad if my information is of some use to you. My address is:

249021 Kaluzhskaya Oblast, Zhukovskij Rajon 1/21 Gurayanova St., Apt 55, Belousovo Sem'ko, Valentin Vasil'evich [TFR 11-12]

[Envelope with stamps and postmarks superimposed over a cache of flowers]

TO: Moscow 12 Il'inka St.

The Russian-American Commission

FM: 730000 Uzbekistan, City of [Karlik ?] III m/r, bldg. 2, apt 40 Islamova, D.K.

103132 [to the side is another zip (index) code] [TFR 11-13]

To the Russian-American Commission on Resolving the fate of American Prisoners of War

A hearty greeting to you from Uzbekistan. I would also like to assist you in your search. I am sending you this old newspaper. According to the 1989 census, two Americans lived in our Oblast, the Kashkadar Oblast.

It struck me even in 1990 -- How was it that Americans could be living with us in such an out of the way place and how did they get here? But I could never find out. Perhaps they do not pertain to the category which interests you, but still [TFR 11-14]

you may be able to ascertain what type of fate threw them into this remote place. Census documents (all-union) on our oblast are located in the OBLASTAT. There are more than a million census documents and finding their address is very complicated. But then, if they were alive, they would have responded. After all, all the newspapers and the television are publicizing the search.

These are my thoughts on the matter. Forgive me if I have provided you irrelevant information but this could be a lead in your future search. Respectfully, [Dil'bar ?] Kalilovna Islamova 730000 Uzbekistan III m/r, Bldg. 2, Apt. 40 tele. 3-53-92 16 July 92

[TFR 11-15]

[Banner for the Kashkadar'inskaya Pravda dated 13 July 1990] [TFR 11-16]

[Article excerpt from the Kashkadar'inskaya Pravda dated 13 July 1990]

It would be interesting to hear what you would say if you learned that our [1 word illegible] Kashkadar area also has its Eskimo. Moreover, the greatest regret is that they didn't find his address, otherwise we could have met him and found out how he got here from the kingdom of snow and ice. But that's not all. In addition to the Eskimo, there are 5 Yakuts, 15 Estonians, 23 Cubans, 2 Americans, 2 Albanians, 2 Britons, 2 Czechs, 3 Finns, 26 Chinese, 608 [may be 688] Arabs, and 1 Frenchman living in the Oblast.